Chained No More

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Summary: Robin couldn't tell what was what anymore. Was he really free? Could he just pick up his things and leave? Did he just trade in an old master for a new one? Battle and war tainted him his entire life, at least the parts he could remember. Could he really just go and "be normal"? Still, at least he has something to feel good about.

Chapter 1: Chapter 1

I see many things in my dreams. Fields. Friends. Trees. The weather's warm; nice and sunny. Clouds never get the courage to cover the sun. I feel weightless, like I'm floating. I get scared for a second. I saw it was a hammock. People chuckled as I fall to the soft ground. I hear children giggle as they play. Smoke from cooking meat burns my nostrils. Dog barks while it licks my face.

I see someone. Barely a figure.

These things... None of it for me. Soldiers were my company. Among warriors.

Robin's eyes cracked open, as slow as a rock turned to dust. Light from the sun slipped its way through the flap of his tent, blinding him as it hit his face. He could hear clanking armor and laughing grow louder as he regained consciousness. The mat he laid on was more like a thin sheet of cloth, nowhere near suitable to be called a sleep space. A hard pillow, more like a rock with a pillow case over it, caused his neck to sting in discomfort. His muscles felt like lead as he picked himself off of the ground. His short, black hair, barely taken care of and starting to grow out, was drenched in sweat. He looked around his tent, seeing nothing else beyond his sleeping mat, his sword (a rusting, iron monstrosity that no respectable soldier would ever carry into battle), a few tomes scattered across the ground, and a small lantern within reaching distance no matter were you stood in the tiny space the tent gave. He opened the flap, and was struck with a wave of light that burned his eyes. His hands rubbed his eyes, trying to comfort the incinerated orbs.

"*Good day,*" he thought with a small smile. The sun was out, and not a cloud was in sight. Soldiers were joking, drinking, or feasting in the mess tent which was always a short walk away. Robin grabbed his purple cloak, put it on, and made his way out and into the camp.

Tents of grander size, and decoration, surrounded him. Fire from torches placed around kept the chilled air away, even though it was only minor relief. Robin could see his breath in the air as he walked, wisps of steam floating free with every exhale. He clutched the cloak around him, trying to keep himself warm. He wasn't too sure of where he was going, but he was enjoying the walk at least. Robin saw the countless soldiers around him, some he knew while others were mere faces in a crowd, all going about their own business. They all saw each other as friends, comrades that would die for each other. He liked that.

"Hey, Robin!" he heard a woman say. Robin turned to see Lissa, a young, blonde pig-tailed woman who always wore a frilly, yellow dress. Another notable trait was how energetic she was. Every where she went was always met with a bright smile, and a skip.

"Yes?" Robin asked simply. He smiled as Lissa approached him, and followed his walking speed as he continued.

"Well, I was wondering," Lissa began, looking up at the sky with a questioning look, "what do you think we'll all do after the war's over?" She put her arms on top of her head, each hand on the opposite elbow. "I was doing a few exercises with Chrom and everyone yesterday when the thought just kinda hit me."

Robin dropped his smile. He never wanted to think about that. Gangrel was still in power and wreaking havoc. He needed to meet an old friend, and settle something. The back of his head burned as he placed his hand on the scar on the left side of his skull, hidden by the black hair that covered his scalp, disguising it as rubbing it his head in thought.

"I guess that we'll all stick together, protecting everyone still," Robin said assuredly. At least, that's what he'd do. Never had any plans to move on or anything, so it made sense to stay.

"You sure about that?" Lissa asked, a small furrow in her brow. "I mean, some of the others are getting married, making family plans. I doubt that they'd stick around long now that that's happened."

Robin's eyes dropped to his feet. He forgot about the new trend spreading around camp. Troops were fraternizing and marrying each other like there was no tomorrow. Libra and Tharja had just announced their relationship; Kellam and Cordelia had already married a few months prior; Miriel and Vaike, despite being polar opposites, were wearing shockingly similar rings around camp; Nowi and Ricken insisted that they were in true love (mainly to address the criticism of 'puppy love'); Gaius and Sully were wed (still celebrating in the mess hall over it, using a lot of alcohol to boot); Stahl and Maribelle wed; Lissa made a few, more than noticeable glances at Lon'Qu when given the chance, along with an even wider grin; and even Chrom himself had proposed to Sumia just the week before.

The only one that wasn't announcing anything was Robin. A sigh escaped his lips as the realization hit him. The war was ending. The Shepherds cornered Gangrel, and they were moving to destroy what was left of his army. It had been a three

weeks ever since Emmeryn martyred herself, destroying Plegian morale while inciting Ylissean rage. The fury that every soldier the Shepherds had was nothing less than horrifying. Robin found that he was averaging eleven-to-one ratios for every available Shepherd. Every battle since was a victory. And it was all ending after just one more.

"I'm sure," Robin said distantly. He had to have hope. He *needed* to. It was a good thing. They should be happy that the Mad King would fall. Correction, *he* should be happy. But then why did he feel so empty?

"Personally," Lissa began, her eyes drifting around the tents and soldiers, "I won't really miss all of this. The idea that there will be a reason for us all to be out in the mud and bugs is never a good thing."

"Yeah," Robin said, giving a nod along with. "But that doesn't stop the fact that we'll always need to be out here. There will always be another tyrant; another threat; another war." He cracked his neck, an audible pop that sent chills down Lissa's spine.

"You don't think that there will ever be ever lasting peace?" Lissa asked curiously. Robin never let much about his beliefs out. He always kept his cards close to his chest. To the point it literally took her a month to find out his favorite color, for Gods' sakes!

It was purple by the way.

"I think that it's not in our nature," Robin explained. A minor throb in his head grabbed his attention, rubbing the spot with his hand. "That we're all just trying to instill an illusion of good intentions. When really, we all just do things for our own goals."

"That sounds like a miserable way to live," Lissa teased, sticking her nose up into the air like a disgusted noble. "But seriously, I don't think we're all like that. Maybe some, yes, but those are the ones we usually end up fighting. You really need to see the positive in people."

"Maybe so," Robin admitted, nodding once more. He couldn't deny Lissa was right, at least to a degree. If someone helped you without expecting a reward, why would there intention of self-satisfaction matter?

"Robin, Lady Lissa," they heard a stern voice call out. They turned to see Frederick, a knight who wore his armor on his sleeve... and body. In all honesty, Robin was almost terrified of what was under the suit of well maintained metal. Whether it contained a human body, a horrid disfigurement of flesh, or even a metal endoskeleton terrified Robin.

"Hey, Frederick!" Lissa answered, as bubbly as ever. Robin merely gave a smile and a nod.

"My Lord Chrom has requested to see you, My Lady," Frederick said, getting right to the point. "He said something about frogs and pigtails, but it was hard to hear over all of the shouting."

Lissa's face went white.

"Panne has also requested your attention, Master Robin," Frederick continued, turning his attention to the grimacing tactician. Robin's face held a sour frown at the mention of Panne, the shape-shifting rabbit that was recruited by the Shepherds months prior. During that time, she managed to distance herself from the rest of the Shepherds, establish a distrust of humans, and spit in Robin's face... *twice*.

"Did she say why?" Robin asked, keeping the frown. The bunny-eared pain in the neck always had it out for Robin. From ridiculing him in training exercises to dueling him on a regular basis, Robin soon grew tired of Panne's venomous hatred towards him. He had no clue what about him made a normally calm and professional being such as herself attempt to beat him to death whenever she had the chance.

"I'm afraid not," Frederick admitted. Robin wasn't the only one who knew about Panne's distaste of him. In fact, it became a good past time to watch the two argue, and even fist fight on few occasions, over issues that started as simply asking how their mornings were. No joke, an argument that once ended with Panne turning into her beast form (a gigantic, feral rabbit with strength to match) and Robin chucking fireballs at her started from Robin asking for the salt during breakfast.

"Damn..." Robin groaned out. He had no choice but to see her, he guessed. If he ignored the request, it would strain their already wire thin tension to a breaking point. But if he talked to her... no doubt that more time would be eaten up. He turned to Lissa, who was still white as a sheet in fear.

"If I may make a suggestion," Frederick said, noticing Robin's glance, "it would be best to get it over with. No point in prying for an excuse."

"I-I wasn't going to-!"

"Just try not to destroy the bathing tents this time..." Frederick said as he walked away from the two. He rather liked his morning workout baths.

"Gods..." Robin huffed out once more, running a hand through his hair. The all familiar scent of carrots grabbed his attention. His vision drew to the east side of the camp, where Panne's tent was. A long sigh left his lips as he walked in that direction. It was going to be a long day...

The heavy, sticking scent of sweat, carrots, wet fur, and fluids best not described clung to the air as the two finished their... *session*. Robin clutched the exhausted Panne against him, the two basking in the comfortable silence. Not a word needed to be said. They understood.

Robin had not been completely honest with the rest of the Shepherds. In truth, he and Panne did have true friction between them, but the emotions bottled up between the two of them exploded one day in a firestorm of movements and passion that cemented what they truly meant to each other. They were the same. Both alone in a large, hostile world that wanted them dead for reasons they couldn't understand. While everyone else got to enjoy wine, parties, and companions, they were always left out in the cold. Robin due to his *history* before the Shepherds, and Panne due to... quite obvious reasons, frankly. Those ears were hard to not notice.

"Gods," Robin groaned out, enjoying the higher quality sleeping mat that Panne and he was resting on. His body felt like melting butter, his muscles loosening and relaxing as warmth surrounded him. A smile was on his face as he closed his eyes. He wasn't sleeping, his mind was racing far too much to knock himself out, but he was simply basking in the wave of release. It was like a rope that was stretched far too tight was finally loosened.

"You're not allowed to sleep yet, Manspawn," Panne said tiredly. She clutched against the exhausted man, and buried herself into his chest. The candles burning in the tent made the temperature increase steadily. It was only a few degrees outside, but the inside of that tent felt like an oven. The stink of carrots permeated throughout the small, but still larger than Robin's, tent. Mainly due to every dish made in there involved carrots to some degree, herbal medicines not included.

"I'm not," Robin said, his hand running through her hair while the other held her against him. "Sounds like you might, though."

"I had to train with Frederick today," Panne said, giving a large yawn after. Her muscles burned and ached if she so much as moved an inch. How that Manspawn could keep moving after half of the 'warm ups' he made them do was beyond her.

"Yet you certainly had enough energy for today," Robin gave a small smirk before his face fell into a neutral expression. He couldn't lie that he was feeling a small tug on his eyelids. A soreness developed in his own body, beckoning him not to move. '*Just a few hours more.*'

"You make me feel good," Panne admitted, her face going slightly red. She hated the way he made her talk like that. It was like some school-girl trying to talk to her crush, and she couldn't stand it. "Besides, it's always wise to not use all of your energy at once."

"Good point," Robin said, his eyes feeling like weights. He would have to leave soon. They both agreed that their 'rendezvous' would always be a secret. It was better that way. Instead of gallivanting around, flashing wedding rings or dresses at the other Shepherds like children showing off their first crush, they knew that they needed to stay professional. "I'll have to yell at you soon."

"I know," Panne felt herself go cold. The arguing was less and less enjoyable every time they did it. A tight feeling in her chest struck her every time she saw Robin's face contort in anger to her. She was sure the same happened to him when ever she threw out those nasty insults. '*Manslave would always make him go berserk...*'

"If we don't soon, they might get suspicious," Robin continued, not making a single attempt to move.

"I know," Panne repeated. She just wanted a few more minutes. She knew he did too, so it would be fine if they just let each other warm one another.

At least for a few more minutes.

A/N

Yes, this is the Dork. I have a new thing. Basically, one of the prompts from my other thing (What If Robin?) kept coming to mind, so I wrote more stuff about it. This is basically going to be the same formula as Greed's A Pain (God, literary incest...) where it's basically a collection of one-shots with a loose sequential order to them.

Also, I picked Panne as Robin's character fit her the best. Their both damaged people just trying to hang on to the few things that make them happy. That, and it seems the only things people like are Chick Robin and Chrom; Dude Robin and Lucina; Chick Robin and Frederick; and Dude Robin and Lissa. I thought a bit variety wouldn't be bad.

And the whole reason of why their relationship is a secret is gonna be shown next chapter. No point in playing around if it's central to explaining their motivation and reasoning behind everything.

Until next time!

Chapter 2: Chapter 2

Thoughts were going a mile a minute...

Hard to keep track. Can't concentrate.

Fragments of memories turned to liquid as they flowed through my mind.

Robin walked through a grand hall. Torches were the only thing to break the thick darkness surrounding him. Stone echoed as he was led through. A crowd of people, easily in the hundreds, filled the massive room; all wearing dark, purple robes, the hood concealing their faces. Robin felt a chill as he had nothing but trousers on, not even shoes to protect his dirtied feet. Murmuring pounded against his ear as the soldiers behind him, their armor and weapons clanking and clamoring in the distinctly quiet atmosphere.

"*My brethren!" Robin heard a loud, insidious voice call out. He raised his head to see, in the center of the hall, a snake-like man. A beard and mustache covered his face while his surprisingly unkempt hair added to the aura of pure madness he gave off. The robes that man wore were distinguishable to the ones the rest wore. They were more complex, when compared to the simple purple and design the others had. "We are all here for one purpose! To appease our Lord Grima and bathe the world in his holy fire!"*

Robin turned is gaze to the three others next to the man. They were much like him, only trousers to protect them. It was a large, bear-like man; a man he could only describe as average; and a young, pretty woman. They were all muttering to themselves as the speaker waved a hand to them.

"*These sacrifices are going to bring about our God's arrival!" the serpent continued, his eyes wide and full of malice. A hard push to his back by one of the soldiers made him continue walking. "Their blood will awaken He Who Has the Fellblood to the essence of Grima! Making him the Vessel to his arrival!"*

A loud cheer erupted amongst the cultists. The room practically shook with excitement.

Robin could only watch as the speaker slid behind the beast of a man, grabbing him hard by the hair and pulling his head back. The large, horrifying, ritualistic knife dove into his throat, opening it and spilling dark red across the floor. The speaker stared down at the first sacrifice's face, seeing him go pale and lifeless before dropping his body to the floor. He repeated the same to the other man, taking his time with that one. The knife bit considerably slower into the smaller sacrifice. Gurgles and groans slid from his mouth as red bubbles frothed out. Once again, the serpent dropped him to the floor, a few convulsions shook before he stopped moving.

"Of all the shit I've seen,*" Robin thought to himself, seeing the monster walk to the last sacrifice.*

The woman was a stark difference to the other two. While their faces were empty, broken, and held nothing, she had a smile like a child. It was pure, fanatical love. She tried to push her neck towards the blade, but the long, talon-like nails of the leader pinned her head in place. Eyes like she was staring into the face of her God. But something hit Robin. Not physically, however. It was an urge he could not describe. Before he knew it, he was already running towards the serpent as he opened her throat.

"*No!" he shouted out, just reaching them in time to see the serpent drop her body to the floor. He couldn't remember her, but he recalled the feeling of watching her die. It was cold, bone-chilling even. He held her bleeding body against him, just whimpering out 'No' as he clutched a hand to her long, deep wound.*

"*Ah," the serpent sighed out, "our last sacrifice has arrived!"*

Tears brimmed in Robin's eyes as the woman went completely limp. Despite every shake, every attempt to wake her, she stayed lifeless. Red painted his body as blood leaked from her throat. He couldn't even find the strength to scream. Just sitting in some horrid palace, weeping like a child.

"*Lord Grima!" the murderer shouted out to his followers, approaching Robin as he wallowed in sorrow. "Accept these sacrifices! And return to us, your most devoted children!"*

Robin got to his feet, stained with blood and dirt. His head pounded, a war-drum for a skull.

"*Now, dear child," the man continued, "get on your knees and accept the sweet death that is to come."*

Robin could only shake his head, tremors shaking him.

"I'm afraid it is not your choice, dear boy," he said in that powerful, insidious voice. "Now, please, get on your knees and find everlasting peace in death.

"Get on your knees," Robin said himself, staring directly into the man's eyes. He stepped closer to the speaker.

"What?" the monster asked, his brow furrowed in confusion. "Of course I will not do that!"

"Fine," Robin barked out, reaching out and grabbing his throat. Guards forced their way through the audience as shouts of panic erupted. "Then I will gut you standing."

The last thing he remembered was the crack of a bow, and the sharp sting of an arrow.

The storm roared around him as his feet walked through the grass. Trees went on for miles as the forest melted into one mass of green. Lightning exploded, only giving him precious light for a few seconds before turning dark, followed by a loud belch of thunder. He held the purple robe against him, sheltering himself from the rain. Drops the size of rocks pounded against him at all times. He just needed to keep moving.

A high-pitched whine tore into his ear. It grew ever louder, drowning out all other noise. He had to punch a nearby tree to keep himself from screaming. His knuckles were broken and bleeding as the wave of noise passed. He couldn't draw attention to himself, no matter what. Just keep walking, and get out of there. He'd come back later.

The loud bellow of a horse caught his attention, causing him to run. His feet moved faster than he could comprehend. Legs burned like fire as the storm raged all the more. The wind was getting stronger, nearly knocking him to the ground with powerful gusts. No matter what, he needed to keep running. No matter what.

Shouts were getting audible. Small snippets of voices would tickle his ears before vanishing completely. He wasn't sure what direction they were coming from, but he knew to get as far away from them as possible. He had no idea whose pocket they were in, and he wasn't strong enough to fight just yet.

"My Lord!" one of the voices became clear as day. Along with the sounds of an enraged warhorse. Hoof stomps with the strength of a God's punch gave the ground no mercy as the trots drifted ever closer.

"Damn it..." Robin muttered to himself. He was caught. He was careless, and they found him. Stupid, stupid! Of course they'd search the forest, you damned moron! What kind of idiot would try that!?

"My Lord, please wait!" the voice called once more. He sounded strangely... worried? Wait, who was he calling to?

The split second of confusion led Robin running into a tree, well hidden by the darkness of the forest. He fell to the wet ground, mud clinging to his clothes as his head burned from the newly opened cut. Robin threw himself to the ground, letting more mud cover his body as the horse's gallop ended. His breath went dead still. Armor got closer. Chains and plate bounced off of each other.

"Chrom?" the voice asked. It was clearly male, his voice powerful and refined. He muttered something about a lantern and the rain before turning back to the direction his horse must have been in. Robin didn't move a single muscle, still laying in the mud as another crack of lightning flashed in the sky.

"Just don't move. Just **don't** move," *Robin thought. He could get out of there. He just needed not to move, and wait for an opportunity.*

"By the Gods..." Robin heard the man mutter to himself. Did he find something? There was no way. He was completely covered in mud. There would be no way he could see him without a stable light source. "Is that a... robe?"

"What!?"

Of course! Robin, you idiot! He found the robe! Robin needed to take it off to conceal himself completely, hoping that he would not come close enough to notice. But obviously he would, you fool!

"Hey, Frederick!" another voice, this one a young girl, called out. "What'cha doing in this storm?"

"You idiot! You got yourself cornered!"

"Lady Lissa!?" the man known as Frederick asked in shock. "I could very much ask the same thing! I am trying to locate Lord Chrom, do you know where he is?"

"*I think he's inside the mess-hall back at camp. Why do you ask?" Lissa said innocently. Robin couldn't be sure, but he thought he could hear her humming. "Hey, what's in your hand?"*

"Please tell me she doesn't have..."

"*Bring the lantern closer," Frederick answered with an order. "It looks to be some kind of robe, a cloak almost."*

"*It looks super weird," Lissa said as she no doubt investigated the article of clothing. Robin stayed where he was, feeling himself sink deeper into the earth. He needed to find a chance before he drowned.*

"*Agreed," Frederick responded. Metal groaned as he got to his feet. The warmth of the lantern got closer to Robin. "The owner of it must be nearby. It wasn't old, or damaged too badly, so it must have been taken care of."*

"*You think it's someone lost in the woods?" Lissa asked, her shoes making sucking sounds with every step through the wet earth.*

"*Perhaps," Frederick said. Something about his tone worried Robin. "However, look at the design. It's a* ***Plegian*** *robe."*

"*What are Plegians doing this deep in Ylisse?" Lissa asked curiously.*

Was that where he was? Robin was walking for so long, he couldn't tell how far he went. The mud sucked more of him in, nearly filling his nostrils.

"*I am not sure," Frederick admitted. The lantern creaked as it moved away from Robin's hiding spot. "But I believe we should alert the rest of the Shepherds. Who knows what Gangrel is up to these days."*

"Shepherds? **Sheep farmers**?*" Robin let out a sigh as the realization hit him. "*A bunch of damned sheep farmers..."

"*Friend," Robin heard Frederick call out, "it would be best to save your sighs until we have left."*

"Damn it!"

Once again, lavish halls surrounded him. The aura of the room around him held no malice, but instead comfort. The decorations were simple, but certainly high quality. Paintings of old Exalts and rulers hung on the walls as candles glowed on expensive looking stands.

"*Robin!" he heard his leader, Chrom, call out to him. He turned his head to see the blue-haired, near story-book level, prince staring back. "Stay with Emmeryn. Keep her safe." Robin gave a nod.*

Assassins came to Ylisstol. They were there to kill Emmeryn, the Exalt. The strange woman, Marth, was there to warn them. Thoughts rocketed through his head as he tried to ready himself. Robin turned to Emmeryn, the surprisingly young, beautiful woman, and could see that she at the very least was frightened. Fighting could be heard down the halls, screams and metal clashing echoed off the walls.

"*Don't worry," Robin tried to reassure her. "You'll be alright."*

"*I know," Emmeryn said simply, her hands clasped one another. Her long, flowing, royal dress would definitely impact her speed if they were forced to run. "I simply wish that we did not have to resort to this violence."*

"*They're not giving us a choice," Robin countered. He scanned the room around them, trying to spot any weak points an enemy could use against them. "I think we'll be good, so long as they don't let any get through."*

"*Why is Gangrel this desperate for war?" Emmeryn continued, ignoring the all clear from Robin. Her face remained calm, but venom was clear in her voice. "I have done nothing but help Plegia after what my father did to them. Nothing but compensation, reformation, aide, and support! Yet he would throw it all away for little more than pride and blood lust!"*

Robin merely shrugged.

"*Not my job to judge why he wants this so much," Robin turned his attention to the only door that wasn't already secured, staring deep into the now empty hall. "My job is to kill as many as his guys as possible."*

"*Excuse me if I say that I was trying to keep you unemployed," Emmeryn ranted still. When Robin first arrived in the capital, she was a peaceful, almost motherly figure. Always a kind voice when needed, and never willing to see the worst in people. Hearing her vent her frustration was surprising to say the least. "It's just that after years of dealing with his constant raids on our borders and empty threats, you would think that he would learn a lesson. Any war with them would*

not result in their victory. Only more blood for both sides, and more hatred between us. It's maddening!"

"*Well, I think we all need to be a little crazy sometimes," Robin said simply, not listening to much of her. "The whole point is to not be an idiot about it." He thought he could see something in the dark, but he wasn't sure.*

"*And he has his entire country behind him!" Emmeryn wasn't listening to much of Robin either. "His people are devoted to the idea of murdering every Ylissean they can find! All because of mistakes my father made, which I am trying to* ***fix****!"*

"*Get down!"*

Robin grabbed Emmeryn and pulled her to the ground before a volley of arrows turned the wall behind them into a pincushion. A wet sensation developed on her dress, making her turn her head down to see a puddle of red form between them.

"*Follow my lead," Robin whispered to her, holding a small, now empty vial in his hand. "Play dead. Well, not that you have much choice."*

Emmeryn was paralyzed. She could not move a single muscle. Her limbs were limp, chest barely moving with every breath. She couldn't even blink her eyes.

"*Wh-Wha... did yo...?" Her tongue became heavy in her mouth before she lost her ability to speak altogether. Her head lowered to the floor, unable to be carried any longer.*

"*A powerful toxin found deep in the forest of Ylisse, Naga's Blood," Robin explained. "But if diluted, it can be a paralyzing agent that can be used to hide your pulse from your enemies. It also looks like the red stuff, so you can fake a wound to, if needed."*

The stomping of soldiers got ever closer. Robin grabbed his robe and wrapped it around himself, pulling the hood over his face.

"Show time*," Robin thought as they arrived. Five Plegian soldiers, their armor cheap and weak looking. Each one could only be described as a recruiter walked into a village and picked five random guys to be in the army. Their faces ranged from horribly forgettable to outright ugly. They quickly made themselves at home in the room of the seemingly dead Exalt, all staring at Robin with unease.*

"*You ingrates!" Robin shouted at them. He was thankful for the extensive vocabulary between Maribelle and Miriel. "You could have killed me, you fools!"*

"*S-Sorry, sir," one of the soldiers was quick to apologize. "We didn't see you in here. We heard the Exalt, and just fired."*

"*You could have at least announced your attack!" Robin continued his rant. "Besides, I have already killed the Exalt." He gestured down to her 'body'.*

"*W-We apologize," another soldier said nervously. Robin knew that he could trick them that he was on their side. But what role did that robe mean? They looked like frightened rabbits.*

"*How did you get in here?" Robin asked harshly, not giving them a minute of mercy. He had to play up the role. If they got suspicious, he wouldn't be able to get them all before one of them got a lucky shot. That, and he was genuinely curious. How did they get that far in without running into the others?*

"*Th-The same way you did," one of the soldiers answered. "Through the back door."*

"*I never came in through the back doo-"*

Robin was cut off by one of the soldiers flying into the wall behind him. They all turned to see the unfortunate soul's spine bent far back, and his armor caved in. The rest turned back to the door, seeing a strange looking woman.

Her hair was long and brown, certainly cared for to some degree. Her face was attractive and appealing. Her long, slender arms and legs gave off an aura of maturity that Robin found himself drawn to. Beyond that... Well... She looked rather odd. Tufts of fur covered her wrists. Her long, almost flopping ears were visibly under her hair. The strange, leather armor she wore only covered her legs, and chest. Every thing else was left unprotected. Robin wasn't sure, but he could almost see a small tail on her backside.

"*Wh-Whut th' 'ell did ya d'ew!?" A solider with a particularly thick accent screamed.*

Her eyes drifted down to the 'dead' Exalt. Then slid through the rank and file of Plegians in the room. No one could tell what she was thinking.

"*Which one of you was it?" She asked simply.*

Fingers pointed to Robin.

"Shit."

"*You'll die last, Manspawn." she said.*

Chrom and Robin stood in the balcony of the palace. Their eyes fell across the horizon as the sun rose to the sky. It was just a few days after the assassination attempt. The Shepherds were going to stay in Ylisstol for a few more days until they could be sure that all security leaks were finished. Also, to deal with some necessary politics regarding the incident.

"*So I hope you see why I can't give you a formal title," Chrom explained. He felt like such a coward, bending over backwards for nobles who have never even seen the battlefield. Emm insisted, however, that he played politician for the time being, and they were ramming her enough as it was.*

"*I save the Exalt," Robin began. "And I get screwed because I'm Plegian?"*

Chrom gave a sigh.

"*You know that's not why," he continued. A hand ran through his blue hair, his head pounding with a migraine from listening to enough ranting nobles. "It's that they're threatening civil war, and we can't deal with that just yet."*

"*Civil war?" Robin asked sarcastically. "Over giving me a fancy word in front of my name?"*

"*I'm sorry, but yes," Chrom said. He leaned against the railing of the balcony, staring the sky before him. "I know how much you wanted to be the Grandmaster."*

"*My plans wouldn't get people killed," Robin argued. He hated the faceless tacticians making plans with such certainty, as though the Gods themselves chose them to be the vessel to their will. Yet the minute Robin offered a better solution, titles and family lines were dragged in. None of the Shepherds were dying, surprisingly, but more than enough of their soldiers were.*

"*I know," Chrom agreed. "They study so hard; about tactics, strategies, about what works with what that they forget the biggest part of strategy."*

"*You have to know people," Robin answered for him. Understanding tactics were important, but the minute that a general saw through and led his guys in a counter attack meant that more people would die than needed. They needed someone who could tell who the next Marth was, and be able to beat him.*

"*Look, if you want my advice," Chrom offered, "just avoid controversy for now. Keep yourself out of the public eye until the war's over." Chrom gave Robin a pat on the back. "When it is, and people see that you're worth your weight, then they'll be more willing to listen."*

Robin gave a slight huff at that.

"*So to get people to realize I'm not a traitor, idiot, plebeian piece of filth, or any other insult they'll throw my way," Robin began, shaking off Chrom's hand, "I'll have to let the entire reason I'm trying to prove myself end?"*

"*Life is hard, my friend," Chrom smiled sadly. The two turned back to the sunrise. "I imagine Panne still isn't fond of you?"*

"*Still thinks I'm a 'dishonorable manspawn'," Robin chuckled slightly. It was odd how fun complaining about Panne was. It wasn't even a week after Robin met her, and he could tell that she hated him. After a long, painful attempt to kill him, they both had to be told that they were on the same side. Apparently, Panne, the woman that broke into the palace during the attack, heard about the attempt and tried to stop it. She ran into Chrom and the others, Robin was busy guarding Emmeryn, and ran to check on them. This caused a misunderstanding where she believed him to be a traitor, and caused their less than healthy relationship.*

"*She certainly has an old way of thinking," Chrom laughed with Robin. The two were silent for a while.*

"*You know that I'm not a traitor, right?" Robin asked, unsure. He rubbed the back of his head with a hand.*

"*If you were," Chrom said, "saving my sister was one hell of a convincing move to the alternative." Chrom looked to Robin, whose eyes were staring into space. "You're a good man, Robin. We all believe in you. Even Panne, despite her bed manner."*

"*Don't really feel like that good of a guy, though," Robin admitted, shrugging his shoulders.*

"*History will say otherwise," Chrom smirked.*

"Robin?" he heard Panne ask. Her sweet, mature voice made him want to stay asleep, as long as she would call to him. "You have to wake up."

"I know."

A/N

I have yet another chapter out already? Wow.

Anyway, I tried cutting back on humor and tried to get better at actual drama. Personally, I never thought I was ever really that funny, so I'm trying to get better at writing more serious stuff. I'm trying to distinguish between genuine emotion and outright emo melodrama. And I'm still being cryptic and weird with all the flashbacks.

Hopefully you guys won't hate this, hate me, my dog, my friends, my internet, or my laptop. I'm just trying to do something different than usual.

Until next time!